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August 1, 2005

The Honorable Pierce Homer  
Secretary of Transportation  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1401 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary Homer:

I am writing you at the request of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to provide comments to you and the members of the I-95/I-395 Public-Private Transportation Act (PPTA) Advisory Panel regarding the proposals by Clark/Shirley and Fluor/Transurban for the development, financing, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the I-95/I-395 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes. The Board reviewed this matter at its August 1, 2005, meeting and wanted to provide its strong support for the project including a viable transit component. The Board previously endorsed the proposal to develop HOT Lanes on the Capital Beltway, and sees this proposal to add HOT lanes to the I-95/I-395 corridor as a logical addition to developing a regional network of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)/HOT lanes.

The need to increase the capacity in the I-95/I-395 corridor is evident with the growth taking place along this corridor, both in residential development and new employment centers; however, the source of traditional funds to do these improvements is limited. What these proposals do is provide not only funding for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the roadway improvements, but also funding for enhancements to transit and other commuter alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle.

The Board has the following comments for your consideration:

- While both proposals have components that provide funding for various transit improvements, it is important that the determination of how transit funds are spent be coordinated through the existing local and regional boards, rather than have decisions made by the private sector as part of an approach to generate support for their projects. In addition to design and operational consideration for transit, construction of park-and-ride lots, and other transit oriented construction and improvements, an allowance for funding transit service needs to be considered. Toll collection revenue should be used to

significantly support transit and other transportation improvements in the corridor. The Board of Supervisors has taken a similar position in its endorsement of the Capital Beltway HOT Lanes Proposal to insure that enhancement of transit is a significant component of the proposal and that the tolling provides a source of funds for its operation.

- According to current Federal Transit Administration regulation, HOV lanes are counted as fixed guideway miles that are used to provide formula funding to the nation's transit systems. FTA guidance has indicated that if a HOV lane is converted to a HOT lane for use by general purpose traffic, the facility would lose its designation as a fixed guideway because it allows non-HOV traffic; if this were to occur, Northern Virginia would lose a minimum of \$10 million annually in federal funding. Any proposal that moves forward should ensure that Northern Virginia does not lose existing transit revenues.
- The proposals indicate that with the additional lanes, the reduction in congestion in the HOV lanes will provide added capacity for those drivers that do not meet the HOV requirements and are willing to pay a variable rate toll to use these lanes. A concern is that the users paying the toll will cause congestion and then to maintain an adequate revenue source, HOV users will no longer have free access to the facility. It is essential that HOV users continue to have free access and that if congestion occurs, the variable pricing will be increased to discourage the non-HOV vehicles sufficiently to allow for an acceptable traffic flow.
- Both proposals include additional improvements to the mainline of I-95 south of the Beltway. It is essential that as part of any proposal all planned and proposed improvements on I-95 be completed. This would include such projects as Phase VIII of the Springfield Interchange and the construction of the fourth lane on I-95 between the Fairfax County Parkway and Route 123 (Occoquan).
- Direct connections need to be made to all HOV and potential HOT facilities. This includes connecting the I-95/I-395 corridor to the Capital Beltway. While there is a current proposal for HOT lanes on the Beltway toward the American Legion Bridge, access should also be provided toward the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This would provide as a minimum access from the general purpose lanes on this portion of the Beltway to and from the I-95/I-395 HOT lanes but not preclude future HOT Lanes to and from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
- The need to provide adequate sound walls is essential to any improvement to this corridor. Those living along the corridor must be assured that all the Federal requirements for noise mitigation will be met.



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We appreciate the opportunity to be an active participant in the early stages of the PPTA proposal evaluation and look forward to participating in the continuing process to develop improvements to the I-95/I-395 corridor.

Sincerely,

*Signature on File @  
VDOT*

Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman  
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

cc: Members, Commonwealth Transportation Board  
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
Gregory A. Whirley, Acting Commissioner, Virginia Department of Transportation  
Karen J. Rae, Director, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
Dennis Morrison, District Administrator, Virginia Department of Transportation  
Katharine Ichter, Acting Director, Fairfax County Department of Transportation

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